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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY, JULY 24-26, 2004

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¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for July 24-26, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶2. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Evrensel: In Nusaybin, Mardin province, DEHAP member Naci Cutlu was arrested on July 21, 2004 for attending the funeral ceremony of Ali Akman, a militant of the Peoples' Defense Forces (HPG), on May 10, 2004. Cutlu was interrogated at Mardin Security Directorate. The court imprisoned Cutlu for violating the "Assembly and Protest Marches Law."

¶3. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: In regard to a recently passed law titled "Compensation for Losses Stemming from Anti-Terror Struggle," the Bingol HRA President Ridvan Kizgin warned that victims should apply to HRA office before they applied to the courts for indemnities. Kizgin claimed the purpose of the law was to hinder people from pressing charges against the government for the losses they suffered during 15 years of turbulence. Kizgin said that in Bingol province, 17,113 persons had been evicted from 2,920 houses in 211 settlement units, which had been destroyed and burnt. Though some were afraid to do so, some internally displaced villagers filed charges with the European Human Rights Court (EHRC) and the EHRC found in favor of GOT indemnification of villagers' losses.

¶4. Evrensel: The Hakkari Province Jandarma team detonated a landmine they detected on the road between Yuksekova and Semdinli townships of Hakkari.

¶5. Hurriyet, Radikal: Mustafa Bayram, a former Van province lawmaker was released on bail. He had been arrested for an alleged raid at a police station in Van to kidnap his son who was involved in drug trafficking.

¶6. Evrensel, Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: A citizen died in the Sirnak State Hospital when the defibrillators did not operate. The NGOs in town tried to present a petition drawing attention to the health problem to the Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC), but the PHRC refused to accept it. Citizens then tried to mail petitions, but police detained the postmen who accepted the petitions for several hours.

¶7. Turkiye, Tercuman, Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: A group of PKK/Kongra Gel militants attacked the police check-point in the exit of Cukurca township, Hakkari province. One militant was killed while the others escaped in the dark. No GOT casualties have been reported. Police found 3 hand grenades, and 7 RPG-7 bullets at the scene.

¶8. Yeni Safak: A poll by Pollmark company on Turkey's foreign policy revealed that 33% of the population considered the United States to be a threat to peace while 20% considered terror a threat. 73% of Turkish people are in favor of EU accession, but are not hopeful about getting a date for negotiations. 45% do not think Turkey will get a date from the EU for discussions. The ratio of people supporting the Prime Minister's reaction to Israel is 82%. 62% of the people believe that Israel is supporting a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq, and 65% believe Israel is supporting the PKK. 83% opposed the US troop deployment in Northern Iraq. 30% think an Independent Kurdish State will be founded in Northern Iraq, while 49% do not think so.

¶9. Zaman, Radikal, Bolge: The President of Harb-Is Union's Adana Chapter, Orhan Sener, said an arbitrator has been appointed to mediate negotiations between the workers at Incirlik Air Base and their employer. Collective bargaining between Harb-Is and the US employer had started on May 12, 2004. The sides undersigned a "disagreement report" on July 8. Sener said if an agreement could not be reached through the arbitrator in two weeks, Harb-Is would go on a strike.

¶10. Cumhuriyet, Turkiye, Bolge, Tercuman, Yeni Safak, Ulkede Ozgur Gundem, Hurriyet: Following three explosions at ATAS Refinery in Mersin, fire broke out in a tanker holding 12,000 tons of fuel. Fire fighters from Mersin and Adana extinguished the fire.

¶11. Cumhuriyet, Turkiye, Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: PKK/Kongra Gel militants attacked Hel Summer Resort in Pulumur, Tunceli province. The militants wanted to take Zeynel Benler (63), along with them, but killed him when he resisted. Benler's daughter, Sema (19), was wounded in the incident. GOT forces launched a large-scale operation in the region.

¶12. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: All PRD and PJA (Party of Free Women) inmates in prisons all over Turkey will send the Turkish Parliament petitions advocating that Abdullah Ocalan be recognized as a "Public Leader." The inmates refused to meet with visitors for one month to protest the isolation in detainment of Ocalan. In addition, the inmates will apply for transfers to Imrali Island, where Ocalan is imprisoned.

¶13. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: In Palu, Elazig province, a fight broke out between Mecit Oztekeli and Hasan Karabulut, a village guard. Oztekeli's mother was killed as she tried to protect her son when the guard opened fire.

¶14. Hurriyet: Bedri Oz, the Representative for Iraq of Tefron Oil Import and Export Company based in Dorytol, Hatay province, said due to Turkey's limitations on the amount of oil transported to Iraq by overland tankers and security considerations, his company started transporting oil to Iraq by railroad tankers. Oz said that his firm made connections for exporting 100,000 tons two months ago, and added that Efron shipped up to 2500 tons daily to Mosul, from where the distribution to destinations within Iraq was carried out by overland tankers.

HEALTH

¶15. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: According to a report by World Health Organization (WHO), among European and Asian countries, malaria is mostly seen in Turkey. Of 9,222 malaria cases in Turkey, 8,760 are from the GAP region. Diyarbakir, with 4,140 cases, and Batman, with 3,147 cases, take the lead.

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